

## Consideration

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## Consideration

by [pipermca](#)

### Summary

"Why are you risking your own life to save mine?" Dreadwing asked.

"Because," Optimus said, "your life is worth just as much as mine."

### Notes

This fic takes place at some point after TFP S2E13 "Triangulation," but before S2E25 "Regeneration"... And offers a different end to Regeneration.

See the end of the work for more [notes](#)

Optimus shook his helm, trying to reorient himself. His gyros were still spinning, and he closed his optics for a moment, waiting for them to still. His fans stuttered as they tried to free his ventilation systems of dust. All around him, he heard rock settling, and the far off sound of blaster fire.

The system errors he was receiving gradually resolved themselves. Nothing seemed permanently damaged. Aside from some secondary system issues and superficial dents and scrapes, he seemed to have made it out of the explosion and fall with only minor damage. As his HUD cleared of the worst of the error messages, Optimus felt steady enough to open his optics again.

It was dark. He lit his headlights and looked around.

He was in a small, cramped space, about four paces wide by six paces long. A wall of rubble was the only indication of what might have been a way out. A quick scan showed that digging his way

through the rubble could take days, if not longer. Looking up, he saw a narrow shaft rising hundreds of meters into the darkness, out of reach of his headlights. Optimus surmised that was what he'd fallen down during the battle in the energon mine.

"Bumblebee?" Optimus called. "Bulkhead?" Through the shaft above him, the sounds of the battle had faded. Optimus hoped that meant the Autobots had vacated the area after the floor collapsed. He also hoped that none of them had been caught in the explosion from Dreadwing's explosive device.

He opened his comm link. ::Bulkhead? Bumblebee? Come in.:: He received nothing but static in reply. Opening a different frequency, he tried again. ::Optimus Prime to base. Come in, Ratchet.::

Silence.

He listened again, and heard nothing. Now, not even the sound of blaster fire echoed down the shaft.

Optimus tried very hard not to think how the void he was standing in was almost the exact same size and shape of a Prime's tomb in the Hall of the Ancients.

A room. Yes. He would think of it as a small room.

He tried the comm frequencies once more before conceding that nothing was getting through the layers of rock above him, or that something had been scrambled in his comm systems. Digging out was not an option, nor was climbing the smooth surface of the shaft he'd fallen down.

The Autobots would know where he went, or would at least suspect. All he could do now was wait.

Optimus settled down onto the ground and shut off his headlights to save energy.

In the darkness, Optimus listened. He heard the shifting of rock as the debris settled further. He heard the ticking of his own plating as his engine cooled from the heat of battle. He heard a quiet squeak, probably a tiny organic creature finding its way through the newly collapsed tunnel.

He heard a rasping rattle.

Optimus froze, and locked all of his fans in place as he listened more intently. A full minute passed, and Optimus had just started to think that he might have imagined the noise when he heard it again. It was a sound like gravel scraping against metal. It was the sound of a cooling fan trying to turn, and failing.

"Is there anyone there?" Optimus called into the darkness.

Silence.

Optimus turned on his headlights again and climbed back to his pedes. He stood quietly, listening, until he heard the noise again, coming from the pile of rubble blocking his escape.

That was definitely the sound of a faltering engine.

Leaping to the collapsed debris, Optimus began pulling rocks from the pile, pausing every few moments to listen. Zeroing in on the source of the sound, Optimus threw rubble aside, digging deeper into the pile. Gradually, he uncovered a leg, then an arm. Working feverishly, Optimus finally uncovered the offline mech laying under the rubble, and pulled him out into what little open

space there was.

Dreadwing's left arm was crushed, and his left wing was twisted and crumpled by the rocks that had fallen on him. Worse, he had an energon leak in one of his main fuel lines. Glowing blue liquid pulsed from a gap in his chest, staining his armor and the ground beneath him. A pool of energon had already collected underneath where he lay in the middle of the room.

"Dreadwing?" Optimus shook the Decepticon's shoulder gently, trying to prod him back to awareness. When Dreadwing did not respond, Optimus examined the damage to the flyer's armor. He quickly found the damaged line, just under Dreadwing's plating on his left side. As he used his patch kit to seal over the worst of the damage, Optimus quietly thanked Ratchet for the regular field repair drills.

Through the repair, Dreadwing remained offline. When he had finished sealing the leak as best he could, Optimus sat up and frowned. Cybertronians were remarkably tough, especially compared to the fragile humans on this planet. The flyer should have come back online already.

"Dreadwing?"

The Deception's optics remained dark.

Field repair protocols suggested that if a damaged mech remained offline for anything more than a few minutes, the next step would be to plug into the medical ports and run a diagnostic. But, as Ratchet's voice in the back of Optimus's processor continued, Decepticons should not be trusted, not even when they were offline. A medic would have adequate firewalls to attempt that sort of connection, but for anyone else it meant risking a viral infection... Or worse.

Optimus was still hesitating over Dreadwing's still frame when the flyer's engine made that terrible sound again: a whine and the cough of an aborted ignition.

Well. Decision made. A moment later, Optimus's data cable was plugged into Dreadwing's medical port, and he carefully initiated a diagnostic command.

The Decepticon's diagnostics were prioritized differently than a typical Autobot's diagnostic report – for instance, weapons systems were listed higher than communications – but the mech's main system reports were still readily available. Optimus let out a small gust of air from his vents in relief when he saw that spark containment and fuel circulation were still running fine. Dreadwing's fuel levels were low, but all of his other indicators seemed nominal. Dreadwing likely wouldn't be able to fly without serious work, but at least he wouldn't gutter while they waited for rescue.

Hopefully, anyway.

Concluding that there was nothing he could do with his limited knowledge, Optimus withdrew his scripts and unplugged his cables. At least Dreadwing wasn't about to die. Beyond that, all he could do was wait for help or for Dreadwing to come back online on his own. Optimus arranged Dreadwing's frame against the rock behind him. The mech was already severely damaged; no sense in letting him lay awkwardly and twisting some cables in the process.

After making sure that Dreadwing was as comfortable as he could make him, Optimus retreated to the other side of the small space and found a place to sit down. He turned off his headlights, and after a moment, he closed his optics.

::Optimus Prime to base. Is anyone reading me?::

Silence.

With a grimace, Optimus idled most of his systems down to wait.

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About three hours later, a small change in the ambient sound brought Optimus out of standby.

Leaving his optics closed, he listened and analyzed what had changed. The rocks had stopped settling. Echoing far off in the cave system he could hear liquid dripping. The quiet hum of a flight engine had ticked upwards in pitch.

There. That was what had changed.

Optimus opened his optics, and met the red optics of the mech across from him.

"You repaired me." Dreadwing's voice sounded pained, as though it was taking him a huge effort to speak.

Optimus turned his headlights back on, but remained sitting where he was. Dreadwing's colour was poor, but his optics were bright. Better, there was no bright stain of fresh energon where Optimus had patched his fuel line. Hopefully that meant the patch was holding. "I did," Optimus replied.

"Why did you do that?" Dreadwing asked. He shifted slightly and winced, making a hissing noise. "You could have rid yourself of a foe. Instead you used your resources to repair my wounds." Dreadwing narrowed his optics. "Why?"

Optimus lifted a hand in a half shrug. "It was the honourable thing to do. I believe you would have done the same had the situation been reversed."

Dreadwing tilted his helm slightly. "The tactically advantageous thing to do would have been to eliminate a foe, to help ensure an honourable victory for your cause... Optimus Prime, leader of the Autobots." Dreadwing's voice rumbled in counterpoint to his engine.

"Except that there is no honour in allowing an otherwise worthy opponent bleed out and die." Optimus held Dreadwing's gaze. "You are worth more than that."

With a squeal of metal on rock, Dreadwing's wings slid upwards for an instant in surprise. Then he winced and lowered them again, more carefully. "I... I appreciate the consideration," he said.

"You are welcome," Optimus replied.

They sat in silence for a minute before Dreadwing shifted where he sat, wincing again. Optimus wondered if his damaged arm and wing were bothering him, or if there was something else wrong. Before he could ask, Dreadwing said, "So what now?" He looked around the space, then back to Optimus. "I assume that you have a plan."

"After a fashion." Optimus shrugged, and then glanced upwards towards the darkened shaft above them in the rock. "I suspect that something in the rock surrounding us is blocking my communications. Unless you can reach the *Nemesis*, we will simply have to wait for someone to find us." He rested his helm back on the rock wall behind him and looked at Dreadwing. "The only question is whether it will be the Autobots or the Decepticons who find us first."

Dreadwing said nothing for a moment, but glanced away. Without looking up he said, "Lord Megatron would not waste resources looking for a fallen soldier. I will be expected to make my own way back to the *Nemesis*."

Optimus frowned. "You are one of his lieutenants. Surely he would send someone to look for-"

"If I do not return under my own power I will be presumed dead or captured," Dreadwing snapped, glaring at Optimus. Then he sagged back against the wall and his optics dimmed. "The Decepticons do not have time for the weak."

"You are anything but weak, Dreadwing," Optimus said quietly.

Dreadwing's optics brightened briefly, and he glanced at Optimus. Then his vents coughed, sending up a cloud of dust. "I must power down to let my repair systems do their work," he said, closing his optics. "You will wake me if anything happens?"

"I will." Optimus waited until Dreadwing's engine idled down before adding, "I'll watch over you."

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Dreadwing had been offline for over a day when Optimus checked his chronometer next. Optimus wondered whether the Autobots were still looking for him, or if something had prevented them from returning to the cavern.

He hoped his soldiers had all made it out of the cavern safely.

When he turned on his headlights again, Optimus frowned in concern. He climbed to his pedes and crossed the space to kneel beside Dreadwing. The flyer's colour had faded even more, and his vents were slow and ragged. Now that he was beside the Seeker, Optimus could hear a soft squeal from somewhere inside Dreadwing.

Cautiously, he placed a hand on Dreadwing's shoulder. "Dreadwing?" he asked.

No reply.

He shook Dreadwing slightly. "Dreadwing? Wake up."

No reply.

He pulled out his data cable and inserted it into Dreadwing's medical port. Now familiar with the Decepticon's diagnostics, he skimmed them quickly and realized that Dreadwing's fuel level had dropped by almost half from the previous day. They had already been low; now they were critical.

No wonder the Decepticon was offline.

Optimus stared down at Dreadwing's slack face as he called up the field repair training again. While the patch he had applied to Dreadwing seemed to be holding, his falling fuel levels likely meant that a slow energon leak was hidden behind some other piece of his armor. Without removing Dreadwing's plating and digging around in his internals, there was no way to find the leak. And if his fuel levels continued to drop, his spark containment would eventually fail. If that happened, Dreadwing would gutter and die.

Optimus rested his hand on Dreadwing's shoulder. "That's no way for a warrior to become one with the Allspark," he murmured.

The only other option was a transfusion. Optimus smiled to himself, knowing **exactly** how Ratchet would react to that. But he accessed the files required to do the transfusion, pulled a length of tubing from his field repair kit, and opened a panel in his arm to locate an access port.

A few minutes later, as the glowing blue liquid slowly streamed into Dreadwing's fuel systems, Optimus heard the Decepticon's engine sputter before settling back into a regular rhythm. A moment later, Dreadwing opened his optics and looked up at Optimus blearily.

Dreadwing stared at Optimus, looked at the tubing running from Optimus's arm to his own, and then followed the data cables stretching from Optimus to his own neck. "What are you doing?" Dreadwing finally asked, looking back up at Optimus. His voice was faint, but it was not filled with feedback or static.

"You were dangerously low on fuel," Optimus said. He checked Dreadwing's fuel levels, and then his own. Dreadwing's were almost back up to where they had been when Optimus had first checked them after the cave in. "You must have a slow leak somewhere internally. I didn't want you to fade before a medic got to see you, so-"

"No," Dreadwing said, his voice sounding stronger. He shifted himself, hissing again in pain as he tried to sit up straighter. "Why are you going to so much effort to save me?" He looked again at the tubing stretching from his arm to Optimus's. "Why are you risking your own life to save mine?"

"I told you," Optimus said. "And your life is worth just as much as mine."

Something flashed across Dreadwing's face, some expression that Optimus couldn't identify. But before Optimus could analyze it, the expression was replaced by a stony mask. "I find it hard to believe that a Prime would consider the life of a mere Decepticon to be worth just as much as his own."

Optimus checked the diagnostics again, waiting for Dreadwing's fuel levels to reach 40%. According to his calculations of how quickly his levels had dropped, that should give the Decepticon another two days before needing another transfusion. "You will believe what you want to believe, of course," Optimus said. "But I believe that every life is worth saving, even those who I have fought against. Every sentient being should be given the opportunity to change."

Dreadwing was silent for a full minute, watching the flow of energon from the Prime's arm into his own. Then he said, "That is not what I expected to hear from you." His optics flicked up to meet Optimus's. "Lord Megatron would not have said these things."

Optimus sighed. "Megatron once believed the same things I do," he said quietly. The diagnostics showed that Dreadwing's fuel levels reached 40%, and he sealed the line in his arm. "Somewhere, he lost his way." As he pulled his data cable from Dreadwing's medical port and coiled the tubing back into his repair kit, Optimus added, "I simply want a better future for all Cybertronians, and that shapes how I treat my people. **All** of them." He grimaced. "Megatron and I once agreed on many things. Now..." Optimus shook his helm. "I do not know what we agree on at all."

Dreadwing watched Optimus put his kit away, his optics dimming. Optimus watched him for a moment, concerned that something else had gone wrong with the Decepticon, something that had not shown up in the diagnostics. After all, he was not as skilled as Ratchet in interpreting the readings. But when Optimus leaned closer, Dreadwing's optics brightened again, and he looked up at him. "I think there are a great many differences between you and Lord Megatron, Optimus Prime."

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Rescue came on the third day.

After days of silence, Optimus came back online suddenly when he received a proximity ping. A moment later, he heard a voice echo down the mining shaft. "Optimus! Are you down there?"

Next to him, Dreadwing's battle systems started to spin up with a sputter. Optimus placed hand on Dreadwing's shoulder. "I will not let them harm you," he said.

Dreadwing hesitated, then nodded once. "I believe you," Dreadwing said, and his battle systems went back into standby.

"I am here!" Optimus called, climbing to his pedes. He peered up the shaft, and could dimly see a light at the very top. "I am uninjured. However, Dreadwing is here as well, and is in need of repairs."

There was a pause, and he could hear a murmur of conversation at the top of the shaft. Then Bulkhead's voice echoed down into the pit again. "Jackie thinks he can blast most of the way through to you, then we'll shift the rest of the rubble by hand. It might take a few hours," Bulkhead said, his voice turning apologetic.

Optimus smiled. "We've waited this long. A few more hours are not that much of a hardship," he called.

"Optimus? Is there anything you need right away?" Ratchet's voice was clipped and to the point. "For either one of you?" Optimus imagined the doctor's expression as one of concern and slight disapproval.

"Yes. We're both low on energon," Optimus said.

"Well, that's easy enough," Bulkhead called. "One air drop of fuel, comin' right down."

A few minutes later, Optimus was seated on the ground next to Dreadwing. Optimus handed one of the cubes that had been lowered into the pit to Dreadwing. "It's probably not the same grade you're used to," Optimus said. "But it should help top up your tanks."

The Decepticon sniffed at the offered fuel suspiciously, and watched as Optimus took a drink from his own cube. Then he sipped at it, and made a face. "Thank you for... the consideration," Dreadwing said.

A boom of an explosion shook the tiny cavern, and a shower of dust filtered down onto them. "I offer you more than simply consideration," Optimus said. When Dreadwing looked up at him, he added, "I offer you a different way to see things. Like I told you when we fought together against Starscream: I offer you chance to help me end this war."

Dreadwing held his gaze for a minute, until another explosion (closer this time) sent another shower of dust down on them. He looked away. "Do not think that your actions here will change how I fight you on the battlefield," he said flatly.

"Of course not," Optimus said. "I simply ask you to think about your options. **All** of them."

Dreadwing fell silent as they both drank their fuel. As Optimus finished his, Dreadwing looked at him again. "I have thought a great deal about my options over the past several months," he said. He looked down, ran a finger around the edge of the cube, and then lifted it to his mouth to take another sip. He grimaced as he lowered it. "But I am one of the elite Decepticon Seekers. I am sworn to loyalty to Lord Megatron. I must fight well to honour the memory of my twin." He glanced at Optimus again. "My path is clearly laid out before me. I cannot stray from it."

Optimus waited as another explosion rumbled through the rock around them. "You have the ability to transform your own future," he said. "But the choice is yours, of course."

"Of course." Dreadwing looked back down at his cube and knocked the rest of it back, making a face at the taste.

They sat in silence, waiting for the Autobots to reach them.

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A week later, Dreadwing combed the Autobot base to arrange a meeting.

Optimus watched as Dreadwing emerged from the mist. "I am not here to fight," the Decepticon said. He gestured at the ground in front of him. "But to give you this."

"The Forge of Solus Prime!" Arcee exclaimed.

"Could be rigged to blow," Bulkhead said, his blasters still aimed at Dreadwing.

Optimus transformed his battle mask aside. "Dreadwing," he said. "What do you ask in return?"

"Only that you use it wisely." Dreadwing sounded weary.

"And the Omega keys?" Arcee asked.

Dreadwing lifted his chin. "In Megatron's possession, under heaviest guard."

"Scream **did** make a deal with the Cons," Bulkhead muttered.

Optimus lowered his guns. "Why?" he asked.

"A shadow of disgrace has been cast upon the Decepticons. It is a cause I no longer wish to be part of," Dreadwing said quietly.

Optimus walked towards Dreadwing. "Then I appeal to you again," he said. "Join us, and help end this conflict once and for all."

Dreadwing's wings dipped slightly. "Betraying my kind is not the same as accepting yours." He turned and began to walk away.

Optimus called out again. "Dreadwing!" When the Seeker stopped, his back still to the Autobots, Optimus took another step forward. "My kind is the same as your kind. We are Cybertronians."

Dreadwing stood still for a moment, long enough that Arcee took several steps towards him with her guns still raised. As Optimus placed his hand on Arcee's shoulder to stop her, Dreadwing turned around to face them again. He glanced at Arcee before looking at Optimus. "You truly believe that," Dreadwing said.

It was a statement, not a question.

Optimus nodded. "I do," he said. He took another step towards the Seeker and held out a hand. "Join us, Dreadwing. Help me end this war so that all Cybertronians can live in peace once more."

Dreadwing stared at Optimus. His optics flicked down to the Prime's outstretched hand, then back up to his face.

Then Dreadwing stepped forward and took Optimus Prime's hand.



This was a holiday present for ParadiseParrot! I hope you like it. ^.^

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